a people's greatness only comes when everybody has a chance to be great. And it comes from, yes, opportunity. It comes from, yes, learning. It comes from, yes, the absence of discrimination. But it also has to come from the presence of reconciliation, from a turning away from the madness that life only matters if there is someone we can demean, destroy, or put down. That is the eternal lesson of America.

We are now given a future of incomparable, kaleidoscopic possibility and diversity. And somehow we have to implant in the soul of every child that age-old seed of learning so that the future can be ours.

Thank you all. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:40 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, MI; Mayor Wellinton Webb of Denver, CO; Mayor Gordon Bush of East St. Louis, IL; Mayor Elizabeth G. Flores of Laredo, TX; Gov. Mary Thomas of the Gila River Indian Community; President's Advisory Board on Race Chairman John Hope Franklin, members Suzan D. Johnson Cook, Angela E. Oh, Robert Thomas, Linda Chavez-Thompson, former Gov. William F. Winter of Minnesota, and former Gov. Thomas H. Kean of New Jersey, consultants Laura Harris and Christopher Edley, and Executive Director Judith A. Winston. These remarks were not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at the White House Millennium Lecture With Jazz Musicians

September 18, 1998

[*The opening remarks by the First Lady and the President were made in a video presentation to the audience.*]

The First Lady. Good evening and welcome to the White House. The theme we have chosen for the millennium is ''Honor the Past, Imagine the Future.'' This lecture continues a series of millennium evenings with scholars, scientists and other creative individuals which we are holding to commemorate and celebrate this milestone.

The President. With the millennium, we must now decide how to think about our commitment to the future. Thomas Paine said, a long time ago, ''We have it in our power to begin the world over again.'' We have always believed that in this country, and we must now take it upon ourselves to take stock as we approach this new millennium to commit ourselves to begin the world over again for our children, our children's children, for people who will live in a new century.

It is to the people of that new century that we must all offer our very best gifts. It is for them that we will celebrate the millennium.

[*The video presentation concluded, and the First Lady then made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, I want to join Hillary in welcoming all our musicians here tonight and all the jazz fans. I thank, in particular, President Havel and Mrs. Havel for being here. When I was in Prague, the President took me to a jazz club, gave me a saxophone he had personally inscribed, and provided me with a band that covered my sins. [*Laughter*] And then he accompanied me on the tambourine, made a CD of it, and sent it to me, so I'm actually a recording artist—[*laughter*]—thanks only to Václav Havel. I also want to thank the First Lady for having the idea for these millennium evenings and for agreeing eagerly to my entreaty that at least one of them ought to be devoted to this unique American contribution to the creativity of the world.

A little more than a century ago, a famous composer arrived on our shores and was amazed by what he heard: African-American music, blues and spirituals, street songs and work songs. It was unlike anything he had heard in Europe or, in fact, anywhere else in the world. After hearing these new, uniquely American sounds, he wrote: ''America can have her own music, a fine music, growing up from her soil and having its own special character. The natural voice of a free and great nation.'' Those words were written by the great Czech composer Antonin Dvorak in 1892. It is especially fitting, therefore, that we have a worthy successor of Czech greatness in the President of the Czech Republic here with us tonight.

In time, the music Dvorak heard became what we know today as jazz. And jazz became the soundtrack of this, the American century. Like America itself, it is inventive and bold, vital and free, respectful of its roots, yet always changing, always becoming, always reinventing itself. The great drummer and band leader Art Blakey once said, ''No America, no jazz.'' This was no mere boast. Jazz could only have happened here because it is music born of the American experience, and it gives voice, eloquent, insistent voice, to our American spirit.

Like our country, jazz is a cultural crossroads where the rhythms of Africa meet the musical instruments of Europe, where black meets white and Latino, where New Orleans meets the southside of Chicago and 52d Street. And like our democracy, jazz provides a framework for flowing dialog, a basis for brilliant improvisation, a point of reference and a point of departure. It poses challenges and seeks resolution, finding it in the coordinated efforts of the community as well as in the unique voice of the individual, syncopation and solo. Like me, you're probably eager to hear some of the music, so please join me in welcoming two remarkable musicians who are our hosts for this evening.

Marian McPartland, as you all know, plays improvisational jazz piano and has now been playing it quite wonderfully for over seven decades. With just as much energy and enthusiasm—I should not have said that. [*Laughter*] I had the chart here, that's the point where I should have ad libbed, but I didn't. [*Laughter*] The thing that I really appreciate is that Marian has long been introducing young students to jazz, even introducing them to Duke Ellington himself a number of years ago.

And in the great tradition of Duke Ellington, Wynton Marsalis is a distinguished composer, big band leader, devoted advocate for the arts and education. It is no wonder that last year he became the first jazz artist to win the Pulitzer Prize for music. And he may be the only musician in our lifetime to be virtually universally acclaimed as the finest player of his instrument in either classical or jazz mediums.

Wynton, Marian, the stage is yours.

[*At this point, the evening's program proceeded.*]

The President. Thank you, Dianne. Thank you, Billy. Thank all of our wonderful musicians. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Marian and to Wynton for showing us how much jazz can tell us about our country, our century, our deepest aspirations.

I did grow up loving jazz. I was inspired, moved by the agility of Charlie Parker and Sonny Rollins, by the inventiveness of Thelonious Monk, by the incredible inventive genius of John Coltrane and the incomparable Miles Davis. They and many others opened my ears and opened the ears of millions of our fellow citizens to a music that was profoundly human and distinctly American.

But if jazz is an American invention, it certainly travels well—from club to concert hall, from coast to coast, across the oceans and back, returning with the imprint of other cultures and new influences. Music that began as American at the core truly has become now the music of the world.

Jazz is also, as it has long been, the international language of liberation, what a man named Willis Conover called the ''Music of Freedom.'' For more than 40 years during the cold war, Willis Conover hosted the jazz program on the Voice of America. Dictators banned it and jammed his broadcasts because they understood the power of jazz to unleash the human spirit. But they could not stop the music. Six nights a week, as Conover started his show with the first bars of ''Take the A Train,'' 30 million listeners in the Soviet bloc would join him for the ride. As far away as China and as recently as 1989, students at Tiananmen Square hummed the tunes they heard on the Voice of America, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie. It became sort of a not-so-secret code in the struggle for human rights.

Tonight we are honored by the presence of someone who has stood at the frontline of that struggle and who can tell us the meaning of jazz for those yearning to be free. A few years ago, as I said tonight, when we were in Prague, we even performed a few tunes together. Please join me in welcoming an artist and a leader whose work is a tribute to the human spirit, and who perhaps will

tell us a little bit about the impact of jazz on his Velvet Revolution, President Václav Havel of the Czech Republic.

[*President Havel made brief remarks, after which the program continued with a question-and-answer session with participants linked to the performance around the world.*]

The First Lady. This is from Sarah Miles in Havasu, Alberta, Canada. Subject: Influences of jazz. Question: Mr. President, how did jazz influence your choice of going into public service over private business? We love you in Alberta. Respectfully. [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, my first thought is that when I was younger in my teens, I used to do this a lot. And I was honest enough to know when I was doing it that while I was never happier doing anything else, I knew I'd never be as good as these guys, so I figured I had to get a day job. [*Laughter*]

That's a very good question. I had never thought about it before, but I think the answer is, my association with music and the discipline and long hours of preparation it took and the joy it brought, particularly when I got into jazz, had a lot in common with what I love about public service. It is about communication; it's about creativity but cooperation, as Wynton said earlier. And like jazz, I don't think you can be really, really good at it unless you care about other people and have a good heart, like these guys do. Thank you.

[*The question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. Well, we should probably end with the question. You know, one of the things that I'd like to say, I'd like to compliment the recording companies who have put out CD's recently, of all of Ella Fitzgerald's recordings for example. And I would like to encourage all the people who are involved in this business to think about, as a way of celebrating the millennium, to look at all the great jazz music that is still available in any condition over the last decades and think about packaging anything that is not yet now in mint condition—the best available condition—in making it widely available, because I think that is very, very important. A lot of young people will listen to this, will carry it on, will imagine it and play it—as Marian said—if they have access to it. So that's a great, great question and a great way to end.

We can't know everything that will happen in the new millennium, but I'll bet you one thing we know. When you hear American jazz coming back transformed as Brazilian music or African music, as Hillary and I have in our trips around the world, I think jazz will be a big part of it. And all of you who are part of this night tonight will know that all of your work will live well into this new century and into this new millennium. And the world will be a better place because of it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 7:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Václav Havel of the Czech Republic and his wife, Dagmar Havlova; jazz vocalist Dianne Reeves; and jazz pianist and historian Billy Taylor. These remarks were not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

September 19, 1998

Good morning. I want to talk to you this morning about what I believe we must do to continue building a stronger America for our children and our grandchildren in the 21st century.

We're in a time of great prosperity and even greater promise. For nearly 6 years I've done everything in my power to create the conditions for that prosperity and to make sure all Americans can share in it. Today, we have nearly 17 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment in 28 years, the lowest inflation in 32 years, the smallest percentage of our people on welfare in 29 years, the lowest crime rate in 25 years, and the highest homeownership in history.

All Americans have a right to be proud of what together we have achieved. But we can't let these good times lull us into a dangerous complacency. The turmoil we see today in economies all around the world reminds us that things are changing at a rapid rate. We can't afford to relax. Instead, we must use our new prosperity, the resources it produces and the confidence it inspires to